

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A locking toggle clasp assembly for releasably coupling opposing terminal portions of a jewelry item, comprising:

a toggle bar connected to a first terminal portion of the jewelry item; and

a toggle clasp connected to a second terminal portion of the jewelry item, the toggle clasp having an opening and a swivel, wherein the ~~toggle clasp~~ swivel is selectively movable between an open position in which the opening is of a first size toggle bar may pass through the opening allowing the toggle bar to pass through the opening and a locked position in which the swivel impinges into the opening to reduce the opening to a second size preventing the toggle bar is ~~prevented~~ from passing through the opening.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (currently amended): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the toggle clasp comprises a toggle loop defining the opening and a the swivel being pivotally connected to the toggle loop ~~, the swivel being selectively movable between a first position where the swivel impinges into the opening to prevent the toggle bar from passing through the opening and a second position where the swivel does not impinge into the opening to permit the toggle bar to pass through the opening, and wherein the toggle clasp is in the locked~~

~~position when the swivel is in the first position and the open position when the swivel is in the second position.~~

Claim 4 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, wherein the toggle bar has a major axis and a minor axis, the toggle bar being larger than the opening in a first dimension along the major axis and smaller than the opening in a second dimension along the minor axis when the toggle clasp is in the open position.

Claim 5 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 4, wherein the toggle bar is adapted to be inserted through the opening along the minor axis when the toggle clasp is in the open position.

Claim 6 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 5, wherein the major axis of the toggle bar is in a plane generally perpendicular to a major axis of the jewelry item.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, wherein the toggle loop and the swivel cooperatively define a first open area when the swivel is in the first open position and a second open area when the swivel is in the ~~second~~ locked position, the ~~first~~ second open area being smaller than the ~~second~~ first open area.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, wherein the ~~toggle clasp~~ swivel is releasably maintained in the locked position due to frictional engagement between the swivel and the toggle loop ~~when the swivel is in the first position.~~

Claim 9 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, further comprising means for connecting the toggle bar to the first terminal portion of the jewelry item.

Claim 10 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, further comprising means for connecting the toggle clasp to the second terminal portion of the jewelry item.

Claim 11 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the jewelry item is a chain.

Claim 12 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the jewelry item is a bracelet.

Claim 13 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 12, wherein the bracelet comprises a plurality of links.

Claim 14 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the jewelry item is a necklace.

Claim 15 (original): The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 14, wherein the necklace comprises a plurality of links.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A toggle clasp assembly for releasably coupling opposing ends of an item of jewelry, comprising:

a male toggle member having a major dimension along a first axis and a minor dimension along a second axis, the male toggle member adapted to be coupled to a first end of the jewelry item such that the first axis is generally perpendicular to a major axis of the jewelry item;

a female toggle member defining an opening and adapted to be coupled to an opposing end of the jewelry item; and

a protruding member pivotally connected to the female toggle member, the protruding member being selectively movable between an open position in which the opening is of a first size where allowing the male toggle member ~~can~~ to pass through the opening , and a closed position ~~where~~ in which the protruding member impinges into the opening to reduce the opening to a second size to prevent preventing the male toggle member from passing through the opening.

Claim 17 (original): The toggle clasp assembly according to claim 16, wherein the major dimension of the male toggle member is larger than the opening.

Claim 18 (original): The toggle clasp assembly according to claim 17, wherein the male toggle member can pass through the opening along the second axis corresponding to the minor dimension when the protruding member is in the open position.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The toggle clasp assembly according to claim 17, wherein the protruding member is releasably maintained in the closed position due to frictional engagement between the protruding member and the female toggle member when the ~~swivel~~ protruding member is in the closed position.

Claim 20 (currently amended): A method for releasably coupling opposed ends of an item of jewelry, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

providing a male toggle member on a first end of the item of jewelry, the male member having a major dimension and a minor dimension;

providing a female toggle member on an opposing end of the item of jewelry, the female toggle member defining an opening that is smaller than the major dimension;

pivoting a swivel about the female toggle member from a closed position ~~where the swivel impinges into the opening to prevent the male member from passing through the opening~~ to an open position in which the opening is of a first size allowing the male toggle member to pass through the opening; ~~where the swivel does not impinge into the opening;~~

inserting the male toggle member through the opening along an axis corresponding to the minor dimension when the swivel is in the open position;

pivoting the swivel to the closed position in which the swivel impinges into the opening, wherein the swivel reduces the opening to a second size to impinge the swivel into the opening and releasably prevent the male toggle member from passing through the opening.

Claim 21 (currently amended): The method according to claim 20, further comprising ~~the step of~~ releasably locking the swivel in the closed position by frictional engagement between the swivel and the female toggle member.